

American Opinion Summary

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CUBA

President Kennedy's Cuban policy statement of yesterday is warmly applauded in early comment. "We shall neither initiate nor permit aggression in this hemisphere," quotes the Baltimore Sun - that is America's "reasonable, balanced and firm policy" and "it is the right one." Only by supposing that the White House is "wholly misinformed about Cuba can any sober person challenge" the President's stand, the Sun maintains. The Washington Star concludes that the President "has said all that needs to be said now about Cuba," and believes "it will be correctly understood" in Havana and in Moscow.

The New York Times declares that "the time had come for plain speaking on Cuba, and Americans, Cubans, Russians and the rest of the world heard it last evening . . . The time has not come for a military invasion or any other drastic, unilateral action by the U.S. against Cuba, and this, too, has been made plain." To the Times, the President "has been firm and frank. If Premiers Khrushchev and Castro were issuing a challenge, it has been answered." The Times' Arthur Koestler characterizes Mr. Kennedy's declaration as a "calm, factual and otherwise admirable statement."

The Cuban situation "requires action far stiffer than our diplomats have yet been able to arrange in co-operation with OAS," the Scripps-Howard press maintains. Although conceding the "merit" of the President's "seeming plea" that the public not "force his hand" on Cuba, it insists that conditions there already constitute "an obvious potential threat" to Guantanamo, other Western Hemisphere countries and the other sites mentioned by the President.

Meanwhile, there has been much discussion of how the US should react to Cuba. Among others, the Washington Post argued that "war is not the only device open to an affronted power, even though it is the ultimate device." The Nation recommended that excited Senators "stop charging up San Juan Hill" (similarly, Louisville Courier-Journal, St. Louis Post-Disp., Wm. H. Hessler in Cincinnati Enq.).

"The poorly disguised element of fear in some of the outcries coming from Congress should be brought under control," said the Philadelphia Inquirer. However, it held, the Administration "should not stand idly by any longer in this crisis but take the initiative" (similarly, Hearst papers, D. Lawrence, R. Drummond). Joining the widespread rebuke to Khrushchev for warning that a U.S. move would bring Soviet nuclear retaliation, the Chicago Tribune advised that he pay less attention to Administration "timidity and vacillation" and more to "the rising temper of the American people."

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